JS 44 (Rev. 06/17)

### **CIVIL COVER SHEET**

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replace nor supplement the filing and service of pleadings or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. (SEE INSTRUCTIONS ON NEXT PAGE OF THIS FORM.)

I. (a) PLAINTIFFS			DEFENDANTS		
VALERIE ESTRADA			FBCS, INC.		
(c) Attorneys (Firm Name, Address, and Telephone Number) Zemel Law LLC 1373 Broad Street, Suite 203-C Clifton, New Jersey 07013 (T) 862-227-3106			County of Residence of First Listed Defendant Montgomery  (IN U.S. PLAINTIFF CASES ONLY)  NOTE: IN LAND CONDEMNATION CASES, USE THE LOCATION OF THE TRACT OF LAND INVOLVED.  Attorneys (If Known)		
II. BASIS OF JURISDI	ICTION (Place an "X" in C	One Box Only)	III. CITIZENSHIP OF P	RINCIPAL PARTIES	(Place an "X" in One Box for Plainti
□ 1 U.S. Government Plaintiff	→ 3 Federal Question (U.S. Government)	Not a Party)		TF DEF  1	
☐ 2 U.S. Government Defendant	☐ 4 Diversity (Indicate Citizensh	ip of Parties in Item III)	Citizen of Another State	2	
			Citizen or Subject of a  Foreign Country	3 🗇 3 Foreign Nation	<b>0</b> 6 <b>0</b> 6
IV. NATURE OF SUIT			EODERITHDE/DEMATERS		of Suit Code Descriptions.
□ 110 Insurance □ 120 Marine □ 130 Miller Act □ 140 Negotiable Instrument □ 150 Recovery of Overpayment & Enforcement of Judgment □ 151 Medicare Act □ 152 Recovery of Defaulted Student Loans (Excludes Veterans) □ 153 Recovery of Overpayment of Veteran's Benefits □ 160 Stockholders' Suits □ 190 Other Contract □ 195 Contract Product Liability □ 196 Franchise □ REAL PROPERTY □ 210 Land Condemnation □ 220 Foreclosure □ 230 Rent Lease & Ejectment □ 240 Torts to Land □ 245 Tort Product Liability □ 290 All Other Real Property	PERSONAL INJURY  310 Airplane 315 Airplane Product Liability 320 Assault, Libel & Slander 330 Federal Employers' Liability 340 Marine 345 Marine Product Liability 350 Motor Vehicle Product Liability 360 Other Personal Injury 360 Personal Injury Medical Malpractice  CIVIL RIGHTS 441 Voting 442 Employment 443 Housing/ Accommodations 445 Amer. w/Disabilities - Employment 446 Amer. w/Disabilities - Other 448 Education	PERSONAL INJURY  365 Personal Injury - Product Liability  367 Health Care/ Pharmaceutical Personal Injury Product Liability  368 Asbestos Personal Injury Product Liability  PERSONAL PROPERT  370 Other Fraud  371 Truth in Lending  380 Other Personal Property Damage Product Liability  PRISONER PETITIONS  Habeas Corpus: 463 Alien Detainee 510 Motions to Vacate Sentence 530 General 535 Death Penalty Other: 540 Mandamus & Other 550 Civil Rights 555 Prison Condition 560 Civil Detainee - Conditions of Confinement	of Property 21 USC 881  of 690 Other  LABOR  710 Fair Labor Standards Act 720 Labor/Management Relations 740 Railway Labor Act 751 Family and Medical Leave Act 790 Other Labor Litigation 791 Employee Retirement Income Security Act  IMMIGRATION  462 Naturalization Application	3422 Appeal 28 USC 158   423 Withdrawal 28 USC 157   425 Withdrawal 28 USC 157   426 USC 157   427 Withdrawal 28 USC 158   427 Withdrawal 28	OTHER STATUTES  □ 375 False Claims Act □ 376 Qui Tam (31 USC 3729(a)) □ 400 State Reapportionment □ 410 Antitrust □ 430 Banks and Banking □ 450 Commerce □ 460 Deportation □ 470 Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations □ 480 Consumer Credit □ 490 Cable/Sat TV □ 850 Securities/Commodities/ Exchange □ 890 Other Statutory Actions □ 891 Agricultural Acts □ 893 Environmental Matters □ 895 Freedom of Information Act □ 896 Arbitration □ 899 Administrative Procedure Act/Review or Appeal of Agency Decision □ 950 Constitutionality of State Statutes
VI. CAUSE OF ACTION  VII. REQUESTED IN COMPLAINT:  VIII. RELATED CASI	Cite the U.S. Civil State Fair Debt Collection  Brief description of cate Unfair debt collection  CHECK IF THIS UNDER RULE 2	Appellate Court  attute under which you are ion Practices Act, 15  ause: attion IS A CLASS ACTION 3, F.R.Cv.P.	4 Reinstated or Reopened 5 Transfe Anothe (specify) filing (Do not cite jurisdictional state U.S.C. 1692 et seq.  DEMAND \$	r District Litigation Transfer utes unless diversity):	if demanded in complaint:
DATE IF ANY	is a married only.	JUDGE SIGNATURE OF ATTO	OBNIEV OF BECORD	DOCKET NUMBER	
07/12/2018 FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	MOUNT	SIGNATURE OF ATTO	JANE I OF RECORD ()	Lika	



## IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

#### CASE MANAGEMENT TRACK DESIGNATION FORM

VALERIE ESTRADA

v.

CIVIL ACTION

FBCS, INC.

NO. 18

2949

In accordance with the Civil Justice Expense and Delay Reduction Plan of this court, counsel for plaintiff shall complete a Case Management Track Designation Form in all civil cases at the time of filing the complaint and serve a copy on all defendants. (See § 1:03 of the plan set forth on the reverse side of this form.) In the event that a defendant does not agree with the plaintiff regarding said designation, that defendant shall, with its first appearance, submit to the clerk of court and serve on the plaintiff and all other parties, a Case Management Track Designation Form specifying the track to which that defendant believes the case should be assigned.

#### SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING CASE MANAGEMENT TRACKS:

(a	) Habeas Corpus -	Cases brought under	28 U.S.C. § 2241 thro	ough § 2255.	( )
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- (b) Social Security Cases requesting review of a decision of the Secretary of Health and Human Services denying plaintiff Social Security Benefits. ( )
- (c) Arbitration Cases required to be designated for arbitration under Local Civil Rule 53.2. ( )
- (d) Asbestos -- Cases involving claims for personal injury or property damage from exposure to asbestos.
- (e) Special Management Cases that do not fall into tracks (a) through (d) that are commonly referred to as complex and that need special or intense management by the court. (See reverse side of this form for a detailed explanation of special management cases.)
- (f) Standard Management Cases that do not fall into any one of the other tracks.

7/12/2018	Nicholas Linker	Plaintiff, Valerie Estrada		
Date	Attorney-at-law	Attorney for		
862-227-3106	973-282-8603	nl@zemellawllc.com		
Telephone	FAX Number	E-Mail Address		

(Civ. 660) 10/02

#### INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATTORNEYS COMPLETING CIVIL COVER SHEET FORM JS 44

Authority For Civil Cover Sheet

The JS 44 civil cover sheet and the information contained herein neither replaces nor supplements the filings and service of pleading or other papers as required by law, except as provided by local rules of court. This form, approved by the Judicial Conference of the United States in September 1974, is required for the use of the Clerk of Court for the purpose of initiating the civil docket sheet. Consequently, a civil cover sheet is submitted to the Clerk of Court for each civil complaint filed. The attorney filing a case should complete the form as follows:

- I.(a) Plaintiffs-Defendants. Enter names (last, first, middle initial) of plaintiff and defendant. If the plaintiff or defendant is a government agency, use only the full name or standard abbreviations. If the plaintiff or defendant is an official within a government agency, identify first the agency and then the official, giving both name and title.
- (b) County of Residence. For each civil case filed, except U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county where the first listed plaintiff resides at the time of filing. In U.S. plaintiff cases, enter the name of the county in which the first listed defendant resides at the time of filing. (NOTE: In land condemnation cases, the county of residence of the "defendant" is the location of the tract of land involved.)
- (c) Attorneys. Enter the firm name, address, telephone number, and attorney of record. If there are several attorneys, list them on an attachment, noting in this section "(see attachment)".
- II. Jurisdiction. The basis of jurisdiction is set forth under Rule 8(a), F.R.Cv.P., which requires that jurisdictions be shown in pleadings. Place an "X" in one of the boxes. If there is more than one basis of jurisdiction, precedence is given in the order shown below.

  United States plaintiff. (1) Jurisdiction based on 28 U.S.C. 1345 and 1348. Suits by agencies and officers of the United States are included here. United States defendant. (2) When the plaintiff is suing the United States, its officers or agencies, place an "X" in this box.

  Federal question. (3) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1331, where jurisdiction arises under the Constitution of the United States, an amendment to the Constitution, an act of Congress or a treaty of the United States. In cases where the U.S. is a party, the U.S. plaintiff or defendant code takes precedence, and box 1 or 2 should be marked.

  Diversity of citizenship. (4) This refers to suits under 28 U.S.C. 1332, where parties are citizens of different states. When Box 4 is checked, the citizenship of the different parties must be checked. (See Section III below; NOTE: federal question actions take precedence over diversity cases.)
- III. Residence (citizenship) of Principal Parties. This section of the JS 44 is to be completed if diversity of citizenship was indicated above. Mark this section for each principal party.
- IV. Nature of Suit. Place an "X" in the appropriate box. If there are multiple nature of suit codes associated with the case, pick the nature of suit code that is most applicable. Click here for: Nature of Suit Code Descriptions.
- V. Origin. Place an "X" in one of the seven boxes.

Original Proceedings. (1) Cases which originate in the United States district courts.

Removed from State Court. (2) Proceedings initiated in state courts may be removed to the district courts under Title 28 U.S.C., Section 1441. When the petition for removal is granted, check this box.

Remanded from Appellate Court. (3) Check this box for cases remanded to the district court for further action. Use the date of remand as the filing date.

Reinstated or Reopened. (4) Check this box for cases reinstated or reopened in the district court. Use the reopening date as the filing date.

Transferred from Another District. (5) For cases transferred under Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1404(a). Do not use this for within district transfers or multidistrict litigation transfers.

Multidistrict Litigation - Transfer. (6) Check this box when a multidistrict case is transferred into the district under authority of Title 28 U.S.C. Section 1407.

Multidistrict Litigation – Direct File. (8) Check this box when a multidistrict case is filed in the same district as the Master MDL docket.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THERE IS NOT AN ORIGIN CODE 7. Origin Code 7 was used for historical records and is no longer relevant due to changes in statue.

- VI. Cause of Action. Report the civil statute directly related to the cause of action and give a brief description of the cause. Do not cite jurisdictional statutes unless diversity. Example: U.S. Civil Statute: 47 USC 553 Brief Description: Unauthorized reception of cable service
- VII. Requested in Complaint. Class Action. Place an "X" in this box if you are filing a class action under Rule 23, F.R.Cv.P. Demand. In this space enter the actual dollar amount being demanded or indicate other demand, such as a preliminary injunction. Jury Demand. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether or not a jury is being demanded.
- VIII. Related Cases. This section of the JS 44 is used to reference related pending cases, if any. If there are related pending cases, insert the docket numbers and the corresponding judge names for such cases.

Date and Attorney Signature. Date and sign the civil cover sheet.



## UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA



DESIGNATION FORM
the category of the case for the purpose of assignment to the appropriate calendar)

Address of Plaintiff:	15216 Shadybend Dr., A	pt. 67, Hacienda He	eights, Californi	a 91745
Address of Defendant:	33 S. Warminster Rd.,	Suite 353, Hatboro	, Pennsylvania	19040
Place of Accident, Incident or T	Fransaction	Californ	ia	
RELATED CASE, IF ANY:				
Case Number:	Judge	TO AND THE PROPERTY OF THE PRO	Date Terminated:	
Civil cases are deemed related whe	en Yes is answered to any of the followin	g questions:		\
1. Is this case related to property included in an earlier numbered suit pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?				
	2. Does this case involve the same issue of fact or grow out of the same transaction as a prior suit pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court?			
	3. Does this case involve the validity or infringement of a patent already in suit or any earlier numbered case pending or within one year previously terminated action of this court?			No 🗸
	4. Is this case a second or successive habeas corpus, social security appeal, or pro-se civil rights case filed by the same individual?			
I certify that, to my knowledge, the within case is / is not related to any case now pending or within one year previously terminated action in this court except as noted above.  DATE 7   16   18   321521  Attorner_ut-Law Pro Se Plaintiff Attorney I.D # (if applicable)				
CIVIL: (Place a √ in one category on	ily)			
A. Federal Question Cases:		B. Diversity Jurisdiction	Cases:	
1. Indemnity Contract, Man 2. FELA 3. Jones Act-Personal Injury 4. Antitrust 5. Patent 6. Labor-Management Relation of Civil Rights 7. Civil Rights 8. Habeas Corpus 9. Securities Act(s) Cases 10. Social Security Review 11. All other Federal Questi	ations	2. Airplane Perso   3. Assault, Defarr   4 Marine Person   5 Motor Vehicle   6. Other Personal   7. Products Liabi	nation al Injury Personal Injury Injury (Please specify) lity Inty - Asbestos rsity Cases	
ARBITRATION CERTIFICATION				
I. Nicholas Linker  . counsel of record or pro se planntiff, do hereby certify  Pursuant to Local Civil Rule 53.2. § 3(c) (2), that to the best of my knowledge and belief, the damages recoverable in this civil action case exceed the sum of \$150,000 00 exclusive of interest and costs  Relief other than monetary damages is sought				
DATE 7 14 18	$ \Omega_c$	Lil		321521 y I.D. # ((f applicable)
NÔTE A trial de novo will be a trial l	Attorney-we-	Law Pro Se Plaintiff  FRCP 38.	Auome	y i. cz. « (i) uppiicapie)

## UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

VALERIE ESTRADA,	) Case No.:
Plaintiff,	)
VS.	) ) COMPLAINT
FBCS INC.,	) CLASS ACTION
Defendant.	)
	)

Plaintiff, Valerie Estrada (hereinafter "Plaintiff"), hereby alleges:

#### PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. This is an action for damages arising from Defendant's violations of the Fair Debt Collections Practices Act, 15 U.S.C. §1692 et seq. (hereinafter "FDCPA").

#### JURSIDICTION AND VENUE

- 2. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §1331 and 15 U.S.C. §1692k (d).
- 3. Venue is proper in this district under 28 U.S.C §1391(b).

#### **PARTIES**

4. Plaintiff is a natural person, who at all relevant times has resided in Hacienda Heights, California and is a "consumer" as the phrase is defined and applied under 15 U.S.C. §1692(a) of the FDCPA.

5. Defendant FBCS, Inc. ("FBCS") is a corporation with its address as 330 S. Warminster Road, Suite 353, Hatboro, Pennsylvania 19040. FBCS is a "debt collector" as the phrase is defined and applied under 15 U.S.C. §1692(a) of the FDCPA in that they regularly attempt to collect on debts primarily incurred for personal, family or household purposes.

#### **FACTUAL STATEMENT**

- 6. On a date better known by Defendant, Plaintiff incurred a debt for personal, family, or household purposes.
- 7. Also on a date better known by Defendant, Jefferson Capital Systems, LLC obtained the debt and hired FBCS Inc. to collect on said debt.
- 8. To this end, Defendant sent a dunning letter to Plaintiff dated July 17, 2018, attached hereto as Exhibit A.
- 9. The letter was an attempt to collect an alleged balance of \$1193.33, which, according to FBCS is the amount owed on Plaintiff's alleged debt.
- 10. FBCS offered Plaintiff a settlement of \$656.33.
- 11. However, despite offering this amount, Defendant intentionally has attempted to collect an amount greater than the offer.
- 12. In Defendant's letter to Plaintiff, Defendant offers Plaintiff three options.
- 13. The first option is to pay the full amount of \$656.33 in one payment. The second option is to pay a \$131.27 down payment and then pay the remaining balance of \$525.06.
- 14. The third option, however, is confusing and misleading. It offers the opportunity to "split" the settlement into three payments of \$218.78 each.
- 15. Defendant strategically determines the amount each of the three payments should be, and provides this plan to Plaintiff.

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- 16. The sum of the three payments of \$218.78 results in a total amount paid of \$656.34.
- 17. This amount is higher than the amount of the stated settlement in Options 1 and 2.
- 18. Upon information and belief, Defendant effectively believes that since it is only seeking a minor amount greater than the stated settlement amount, the difference is not noticeable.
- 19. However, no matter how small the amount is, Defendant is simply not entitled to collect an amount different than that of the stated settlement offer because it is misleading to the consumer and an attempt to collect an amount greater than allowed. This amounts to an aggregate amount of money the Defendant has collected from unaware consumers.
- 20. Defendant FBCS was acting as Jefferson's agent, and thus, Jefferson is vicariously liable.

#### Plaintiff Has Suffered a Concrete and Particularized Injury

- 21. Congress has codified Fair Debt Collection Practices Act to provide specific protections and rights to consumers to ensure that sellers would not present false and deceptive information in order to lure the consumer into making over payments.
- 22. Defendant has presented false and deceptive information to Plaintiff within its collection letter.
- 23. Plaintiff sustained a concrete and particularized injury by Defendant's placement of provisions within its letter that violated Plaintiff's rights under the FDCPA.
- 24. Plaintiff further sustained injury by being subject to Defendant's false and unjust representations.
- 25. Upon information and belief, Defendant has benefitted from utilizing this practice by unsuspecting consumers who merely pay in accordance with the plan provided him or her, to the benefit of Defendant by collecting extra monies.

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#### **CLASS ACTION ALLEGATIONS**

#### The Class

26. Pursuant to Rule 23 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure ("FRCP") Plaintiff seeks certification of the class, initially defined as follows:

All consumers with a California address that have received collection letters substantially similar to Exhibit A from FBCS Inc. within one year prior to the filing of this complaint.

27. Excluded from the Class is Defendant herein, and any person, firm, trust, corporation or other entity related to or affiliated with Defendant, including, without limitation, persons who are officers, directors, employees, associates or partners of Defendant.

#### Numerosity

- 28. Upon information and belief, Defendant FBCS has sent dunning letters to thousands of consumers in Pennsylvania, each of which contains language that violates the FDCPA. The members of the Class, therefore, are believed to be so numerous that joinder of all members is impracticable.
- 29. Under the FDCPA, Dunning letters sent from Defendant, received by the Class, are to be evaluated by the objective standard of the hypothetical "least sophisticated consumer."
- 30. The exact number and identities of the members of the Class are unknown at this time and can only be ascertained through discovery. Identification of the members of the Class is a matter capable of ministerial determination from Defendant's records.

#### **Common Questions of Law and Fact**

31. There are questions of law and fact common to the class that predominates over any questions affecting only individual Class members. These common questions of law and fact include, without limitation: (i) whether Defendant violated various provisions of the FDCPA; (ii) whether Plaintiff and the Class have been injured by Defendant's conduct; (iii) whether Plaintiff

and the Class have sustained damages and are entitled to restitution as a result of Defendant's wrongdoing and, if so, what is the proper measure and appropriate statutory formula to be applied in determining such damages and restitution; and (iv) whether Plaintiff and the Class are entitled to declaratory and/or injunctive relief.

#### **Typicality**

32. Plaintiff's claims are typical of the claims of the members of the Class, and Plaintiff has no interests adverse or antagonistic to the interests of other members of the Class.

#### Protecting the Interests of the Class Members

33. Plaintiff will fairly and adequately represent the Class members' interests in that Plaintiff's counsel is experienced and, further, anticipates no impediments in the pursuit and maintenance of the Class Action as sought herein.

#### Proceeding Via Class Action is Superior and Advisable

- 34. A class action is superior to other methods for the fair and efficient adjudication of the claims herein asserted.
- 35. The members of the Class are generally unsophisticated individuals, whose rights will not be vindicated in the absence of a Class Action.
- 36. Prosecution of separate actions by individual members of the Class would create the risk of inconsistent or varying adjudications resulting in the establishment of inconsistent or varying standards for the parties.
- 37. A Class Action will permit a large number of similarly situated persons to prosecute their common claims in a single forum simultaneously, efficiently, and without the duplication of effort and expense that numerous individual actions would engender. Class treatment also will permit the adjudication of relatively small claims by many Class members who could not otherwise afford to seek legal redress for the wrongs complained of herein.

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- 38. Absent a Class Action, the members of the Class will continue to suffer losses borne from Defendant's breaches of Class members' statutorily protected rights as well as monetary damages, thus allowing and enabling: (a) Defendant's conduct to proceed and; (b) Defendant to further enjoy the benefit of its ill-gotten gains.
- 39. Defendant has acted, and will act, on grounds generally applicable to the entire Class, thereby making appropriate a final injunctive relief or corresponding declaratory relief with respect to the Class as a whole.

# VIOLATIONS OF THE FAIR DEBT COLLECTION PRACTICES ACT 15 U.S.C. §1692 et seq. BY FBCS

- 40. Plaintiff repeats the allegations contained in the above paragraphs and incorporates them as if specifically set forth at length herein.
- 41. FBCS has violated the following provisions of the FDCPA:
- 42. Section 1692e provides:

#### § 1692e. False or misleading representations

A debt collector may not use any false, deceptive, or misleading representation or means in connection with the collection of any debt. Without limiting the general application of the foregoing, the following conduct is a violation of this section: . . .

- (2) The false representation of--
  - (A) the character, amount, or legal status of any debt;
- (10) The use of any false representation or deceptive means to collect or attempt to collect any debt or to obtain information concerning a consumer.
- 43. Section 1692f provides:

§ 1692f. Unfair Practices

A debt collector may not use unfair or unconscionable means to collect or attempt to collect any debt.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff, Valerie Estrada, respectfully requests that this Court do the following for the benefit of Plaintiff:

- A. Enter a judgment against Defendant for actual and statutory damages, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k;
- B. Appoint Plaintiff as class representative and appoint counsel as class counsel;
- C. Award costs and reasonable attorneys' fees, pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1692k;
- D. Grant such other and further relief as may be just and proper.

#### JURY TRIAL DEMAND

44. Plaintiff demands a jury trial on all issues so triable.

Dated this 12th day of July,

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicholas Linker, Esq. ZEMEL LAW LLC

1373 Broad Street, Suite 203-C

Clifton, New Jersey 07013

(T) 862-227-3106

nl@zemellawllc.com

## EXHIBIT A